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ABSTRACT

Consistency between personal residential expectations and parental preferences was analyzed through results from 1,957 nonmetropolitan and 1,347 metropolitan questionnaires from Utah's 1980 graduating high school seniors. Students responded to two questions asking where they thought their parents/guardians wanted them to live after graduation and where students thought they would live after graduation. There were significant differences between the percentage of youth expecting to stay in their home community and the percentage perceiving their parents as wanting them to stay. Of the metropolitan youth, 65.9% expected to stay in their current county while 79.9% perceived their parents as wanting them to stay. Of the nonmetropolitan youth, only 41.2% expected to stay while 56.1% perceived their parents as wanting them to stay. Differences between various measures (sex, religion, family status, length of residence) and each of the two dependent variables (personal expectations and perceived parental preferences) across the metropolitan and nonmetropolitan settings were significant. Among metropolitan and nonmetropolitan seniors the perceived parental preferences and personal expectations were more often consistent for Mormons than for non-Mormons. The metropolitan-nonmetropolitan discrepancy between parental preferences and personal expectancy among those perceiving their parents as wanting them to stay suggests that nonmetropolitan areas are less appealing to youth than to their parents. Four tables and a page of references conclude the report. (BRR)

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CONSISTENCY BETWEEN PERSONAL RESIDENTIAL EXPECTATIONS AND PARENTAL PREFERENCES AS PERCEIVED BY METROPOLITAN AND NONMETROPOLITAN YOUTH IN UTAH

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This research attempts to integrate aspects of the literature on the family and migration with the more recent literature on migration preferences and expectations. Preferences and expectations are the two social psychological variables to emerge as dominant concepts in migration literature. Zuiches, (1980) describes the differences between preferences, expectations, and migration as being an example of the distinction between attitudes, expected behavior, and actual behavior that has received widespread attention in sociological analysis. The concepts are consistent with multistage decision making models that recognize discrete behavioral events, such as migration, as being part of a continuous complex process, (Speare et. al., 1976). Analyses focused on any one of the stages as well as their interrelations are important because each reveals different information.

Although preferences have been defined as personal desires or attitudes toward living in a place or type of place, they can be conceptualized as preferences people have regarding where another individual should live. Zuiches, (1982) lists research on the measurement of preferences high on the list of issues needing further study. In fact, the concepts and methodology developed in the preference literature provides an innovative framework for examining a broad range of issues in migration studies. The preference measure utilized in this study expands on preference research to include the preference parents are perceived as having for their children. Such a conceptualization is particularly relevant for the high school seniors, the population for this study. They are in a life period when transition from dependence to independence is occurring. This utilization of preference may be justified by research on the role of the family in migration decisions and by studies on residential

preferences. One of the more important avenues of family influence is likely to be preferences youth feel their parents have for them. The major purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between this measure of preferences and migration expectations. The research will be guided by the following hypotheses: (1) the consistency between perceived parental preferences and personal expectations will vary by type of residence, sex, religion, family status and length of residence and (2) the consistency between perceived parental preferences and personal expectations will vary by the degree of movement required to meet the parental preferences.

The Setting

The state in which this study was conducted, Utah, has been noted for being culturally atypical (Kan and Kim, 1981). Utah's uniqueness is derived partly from the influence of the Mormon religion whose members make-up about 70 percent of its population but only 1 percent of the nation's population. The geographic area over which Mormons numerically dominate, Utah and portions of the bordering states, has been described as the most distinct religious based culture region in the United States. A socio-demographic finding that helps document its uniqueness is that the states population has both a higher level of formal education and fertility than the population of any other state (Bernstein, 1982). Because of this consideration the greatest value of this analysis may be its contribution to helping to understand socio-demographic relationships within this important American setting.

Literature Review

Migration has come to be seen as involving a complex decision making process. Individuals may be viewed as constantly receiving and evaluating

migration relevant information. Since the migration of an individual will usually impact other people it is reasonable to expect other individuals to influence the decision of the potential migrant. For high school seniors parents are among the people who might be especially important in formulating migration plans. While it is common to view parents as inhibiting migration, several researchers have provided evidence that the family of orientation often facilitates migration. (Brown, et. al. 1963, Choldin 1973, Crawford 1966, Tilly and Brown, 1967). In one of the initial studies to recognize the facilitating functions of the family in the migration of youth, Crawford, (1966) noted that the inhibiting effects of attachments had been commonly treated as the only functions of the family. The out migration of youth may also be viewed as important in the development of emotional as well as economic independence of youth, not to mention the possible weakening of parental authority. (See for example Goode, 1963.) In this sense, migration is a socially acceptable process of transferring independence and for relieving parents from their guardian duties.

The relationship between personal preferences and subsequent migration expectation is contingent on a number of factors. In his comprehensive review of previous studies of preferences, expectations, and actual migration, Zuiches (1980) notes that some factors are related to one of the concepts but not to others. He explains that slight differences in question wording can account for differences. The review indicated that about 37 percent of the population would usually state a preference for migration but that only 21-28 percent expect to migrate. Zuiches (1980) also points out that explanations of migration should not simply be ascribed as explanations of preferences or expectations.

In his analysis of family support for migration of high school seniors, Crawford (1966) noted a need for further research to introduce control variables such as age and sex. He also indicates that the role of the family in facilitating as well as inhibiting migration should be contrasted across urban and rural environments. Numerous studies have examined the relationship between these variables and specific migration measures but the specific interrelations mentioned by Crawford have not been examined (Shaw, 1973.). In his assessment of issues needing further study, Wardwell (1981) includes the need for examination of individual and family decision making processes along with analyses of the relations between residential preferences and various individual attributes.

In brief review, research on migration expectations and residential preferences has earned a key position in migration literature. There is a need to further integrate concepts from this research with those of earlier studies. This study attempts to integrate aspects of the concepts from these more recent lines of research with literature on the family and migration. In particular, the concepts developed in residential preference studies appear to have application for examining the long standing interest in the influence of relatives and friends on the migration decisions of individuals. General sociological studies indicate that one of the primary objectives of individuals is to conform to the goals or preferences others, especially significant others, have or are perceived as having for them.

Data and Methods

The data analyzed in this study came from a survey of Utah's 1980 graduating high school seniors. Since comparisons across metropolitan and nonmetropolitan settings were desired, Utah's 29 counties were classified into rural, urban and metropolitan categories. Rural counties consisted of 13 nonmetropolitan counties which did not have a place containing 2,500

people or more in 1970. Twelve other nonmetropolitan counties with a place of 2,500 or more were classified as urban. Finally, four counties were designated metropolitan conforming to the 1970 bounding of Utah's Standard Metropolitan Statistics Areas (SMSAS). The rural and urban counties were collapsed to form the nonmetropolitan category for this study. Questionnaires were completed by 1,957 nonmetropolitan seniors and 1,347 by metropolitan seniors for a response rate of 68 percent. The questionaires were self administered within classrooms.

The specific wording of the question operationalizing perceived parental residential preferences was:

> Where do you think your parents (guardians) want you to live after graduation? City _____ State _____ ?

Personal expectations were ascertained with the following item:

> Most students seem to have several place in mind in which they might live after graduation. Please complete the chart below about the places in which you are most likely to live after graduation.

The city listed first in the chart is utilized in this study. Utilizing census information which cross lists counties and cities, the places for both measures were translated into county codes. Perceived parental preferences and personal expectations were treated as consistent only if the counties were the same. This conforms to the established practice of treating the county as the migration defining boundary in the United States. Each measure was further compared with the student's county of residence and categorized according to whether meeting the preference or expectation would result in:

(1) Staying in the county of residence
(2) Moving to a(nother) metropolitan county within Utah
(3) Moving to a(nother) nonmetropolitan county within Utah
(4) Moving out of Utah

Findings

There are significant differences between the percentage of youth expecting to stay in their home community and the percentage perceiving their parents as wanting them to stay (Table 1). Of the metropolitan youth 65.9 percent expect to stay in their present county of residence while 79.9 perceive their parents as wanting them to stay. The percentage of nonmetropolitan youth expecting to stay is only 41.2 percent while 56.1 percent perceive their parents as wanting them to stay. As a gross measure of consistency, the percentage point differences suggest a high degree of consistency between personal expectations and parental preferences. The difference between the percentages is only 14 percentage points with parents, as expected, preferring the youth to stay more often than the youth expect to do so. Interestingly, the difference is just about the same for both the metropolitan and nonmetropolitan seniors.

The differences between the respective measures across the metropolitan and nonmetropolitan settings is significant. The relatively small percentage of nonmetropolitan youth expecting to stay is somewhat surprising in face of the nonmetropolitan migration reversal.[1] Indeed, the percentage of metropolitan youth expecting to stay and the percentage perceiving their parents as preferring them to stay is around 24 percentage points higher, respectively, than they are in nonmetropolitan counties. Studies have shown that nonmetropolitan counties in Utah have followed the national pattern with respect to the recent migration reversal (Stinner and Toney, 1980). It is specifically interesting to note that many, close to one-half of the graduating seniors in nonmetropolitan areas (43.9%), perceive thier parents as wanting them to leave. Unfortunately,

since data for matching actual parental preferences with those of the youth are not available, the extent to which this corresponds to personal residence plans of the parents cannot be directly assessed. However, since surveys of adults generally show a smaller percent expecting to move (Zuiches, 1980), the results suggest many youth do not perceive their parents as necessarily wanting them to live nearby.

The relationship between sex, religion, family status, length of residence and the two dependent variables, personal expectations and perceived parental pretences, are also reported in Table 1. For each category of these variables the percentage of youth expecting to stay in their current county of residence is less than the percentage perceiving their parents as wanting them to do this. The variation between categories of the independent variables and the respective dependent variables is remarkably similar across the metropolitan and nonmetropolitan classifications. Perhaps most noteworthy is the LDS-nonLDS differences. In this instance the particularly low percentage of nonLDS youth expecting to stay is matched by a corresponding lower percentage perceiving their parents as preferring them to stay. Similarly, both percentages are increased for the Mormon youth. These results suggest that the influence of parental preferences on youth is similar across these groupings.

The differences between the metropolitan and nonmetropolitan youth with respect to differences between the personal expectations and perceived parental preferences respectively remain significant. That is for every category of each attribute the percentage expecting to stay and the percentage perceiving their parents as preferring them to stay is less among the nonmetropolitan than among the metropolitan youth. For example, only 24.5 percent of the nonMormons expect to remain in their

current nonmetropolitan county of residence whereas 53.5 percent of the metropolitan expect to stay. Again the differences between Mormons are similar although the percentage expecting to stay is higher in both settings than it is for nonMormons.

The comparison of the county in which the students perceive their parents as wanting them to live with the one in which they expect to live reveals a higher consistancy for metropolitan than for nonmetropolitan youth (Table 2). Of the metropolitan senior 79.8 percent expect to live in the same county as they perceive their parents as wanting them to live while 69.5 percent of the nonmetropolitan seniors expect to do this (Table 2). This metropolitan - nonmetropolitan difference contrasts sharply with the nearly equal percentage point differences between parental preferences and personal expectations within the two settings. The metropolitan nonmetropolitan differences are also significant within each category of the four control variables.

Differences between categories of the attributes are significant across both settings only for religion (Table 2). Among metropolitan and nonMetropolitan seniors the perceived parental preferences and personal expectations are consistent more often for LDS than for nonLDS. This seems to be accordant with other studies which suggest relatively stronger ties or parental authority for Mormon families (Kephart 1982).

A final concern of this study is the extent to which perceived parental preferences and personal expectations are consistent according to whether the parents are perceived as wanting the youth to stay or move. Table 3 shows a greater difference between metropolitan and nonmetropolitan youth who perceive their parents as wanting them to stay in their current county of residence, than among those who perceive their

parents as wanting them to move. The percentage point differences between metropolitan and nonmetropolitan is 10.7 among those perceiving their parents as wanting them to stay and 5.5 for those who perceive their parents as wanting them to move. The discreptancy between the metropolitan and nonmetropolitan youth who perceive their parents as wanting them to stay persist across the categories of the four attributes. The most dramatic difference is between the nonLDS students. Among the metropolitan nonLDS 71.6 percent expect to stay whereas only 48.0 percent of the nonLDS youth in nonmetropolitan areas expect to conform to their parents preference for them to to stay (Table 3). Among the seniors perceiving their parents as wanting them to move, the metropolitan-nonmetropolitan discrepancy is not consistent across the four control variables. For instance, the consistency between perceived parental preferences and personal expectations is higher for LDS nonmetropolitan youth than LDS metropolitan youth.

Finally, among those who perceive their parents as wanting them to move, consistency is especially low if the parental preference is for a nonmetropolitan county (Table 4). This is the case for metropolitan youth as well as for nonmetropolitan youth who would have to move to another nonmetropolitan county. It is particularly interesting that consistency is much higher for those who perceive their parents as wanting them to leave Utah. Perhaps, more discussion and reconciliation have taken place for the out-of-state category.

Conclusions

The results of this resarch indicate that most youth expect to abide by their perceived parents preference when choosing a place to live after graduation from high school. It is important to note that metropolitan

youth expect to conform to their parents preferences, as they perceive them, to a greater extent than do nonmetropolitan youth. Furthermore, the setting dicrepancy existed across each category of sex, religion, family status, and length of residence. This consistency suggests a strong influence by some aspect to the type of residence.

The greater metropolitan-nonmetropolitan discrepancy between perceived parental preferences and personal expectancy among those perceiving their parents as wanting them to stay suggests that nonmetropolitan areas are less appealing to the youth than to their parents. The lower consistency for metropolitan and nonmetropolitan youth who perceive their parents as wanting them to move to a nonmetropolitan county further indicates this. In essence, these results indicate low conformity when parents are perceived as wanting a nonmetropolitan residence for their youth regardless of whether or not a move would be required to abide by the preferences.

The analysis suggests that integration of concepts form the growing body of literature on residential preferences into broader theories of migration would be useful. This study is a preliminary attempt to analyze parental influences as operating though preferences as perceived by the youth. Further analysis which includes personal preferences, and actual migration in a multivariate analysis is needed.

[1] Separate analysis of another questionaire item ascertaining long-term residence expectations were similar (Toney, et. al. 1983). This suggests that the potential for nonmetropolitan youth to be expecting to leave for college and then return cannot account for these results.

Table 1. Percentage of Metropolitan and Nonmetropoligan High School Seniors Expecting to Stay in their Current County of Residence and Percentage Perceiving their Parents as Preferring them to Stay.

	METROPOLITAN		NONMETROPOLITAN	
	Personal Expectations % (N)	Parental Preferences % (N)	Personal Expectations % (N)	Parental Preferences % (N)
Total	65.9 (1140)	79.9 (1097)	41.2 (1697)	56.1 (1511)
Sex				
Male	69.1 (544)	81.3 (538)	44.5 (830)	60.9 (751)
Female	69.2 (596)	78.6 (561)	38.2 (867)	51.4 (760)
Religion				
LDS	70.6 (856)	83.0 (845)	43.9 (1443)	58.4 (1295)
Non-LDS	53.5 (273)	70.8 (240)	24.5 (245)	40.4 (208)
Family Status				
Intact	66.6 (971)	79.9 (947)	41.3 (1537)	56.1 (1369)
Broken	63.3 (169)	80.5 (159)	36.5 (170)	52.6 (152)
Length of Residence				
0-2 years	54.4 (79)	66.7 (78)	41.0 (156)	57.7 (123)
3-5 years	60.7 (84)	78.2 (78)	30.5 (164)	45.5 (143)
6-10 years	62.2 (180)	79.7 (172)	37.3 (279)	56.0 (248)
11-16 years	60.6 (165)	74.5 (145)	46.6 (206)	56.0 (193)
17 or more years	71.3 (328)	82.5 (331)	42.4 (432)	55.7 (388)
All life	71.6 (148)	80.3 (137)	41.0 (2[illegible])	58.9 (207)

Table 2. Percentage of Metropolitan and Nonmetropolitan Youth Expecting to Live in the Same County that they Perceive their Parents as Preferring for them by Sex, Religion, Family Status and Length of Residence.

	METROPOLITAN	NONMETROPOLITAN
Total	79.8 (989)	69.5 (1500)
Sex		
Male	81.6 (468)	68.8 (686)
Female	78.1 (521)	70.3 (714)
Religion		
LDS	83.9 (667)	73.2 (754)
Non-LDS	73.3 (197)	57.3 (113)
Family Status		
Intact	80.1 (850)	69.9 (1273)
Broken	77.6 (143)	63.0 (135)
Length of Residence		
0-2 years	78.6 (70)	68.9 (119)
3-5 years	65.8 (73)	72.0 (132)
6-10 years	78.7 (155)	67.2 (235)
11-16 years	82.2 (135)	72.9 (177)
17 or more	82.7 (295)	68.5 (359)
All life	83.2 (131)	69.2 (155)

Table 3. Percentage of Metropolitan and Nonmetropolitan Youth Expecting to Live in the Same County that they Perceive their Parents as Preferring for them by Sex, Religion, Family Status and Length of Residence Stratified by Parental Preferences.

	PARENTAL PREFERENCES			
	Stay		Move	
	Metropolitan	Nonmetropolitan	Metropolitan	Nonmetropolitan
Total	81.3 (786)	70.6 (781)	73.8 (203)	68.3 (619)
Sex				
Male	84.1 (377)	71.9 (409)	71.4 (91)	57.1 (312)
Female	78.7 (405)	69.1 (372)	75.8 (112)	71.7 (342)
Religion				
LDS	84.1 (634)	72.9 (700)	71.2 (132)	76.7 (451)
Non-LDS	71.6 (148)	48.0 (75)	76.2 (63)	69.6 (112)
Family Status				
Intact	81.9 (675)	71.2 (711)	73.3 (176)	68.3 (562)
Broken	78.6 (117)	61.4 (70)	73.9 (23)	64.6 (65)
Length of Residence				
0-2 years	77.8 (45)	68.1 (69)	77.3 (22)	70.0 (50
3-5 years	69.0 (58)	62.9 (62)	60.0 (15)	80.0 (70)
6-10 years	79.0 (124)	62.1 (132)	77.4 (31)	73.8 (103)
11-16 years	82.0 (100)	79.4 (97)	82.8 (35)	65.0 (80)
17 or more	84.3 (242)	70.6 (197)	75.5 (53)	66.0 (162)
All life	85.8 (106)	69.0 (113)	69.5 (23)	69.5 (82)

Table 4. Consistency Between Perceived Parental Preferences and Personal Residential Expectations Among Youth who Perceive their Parents as Wanting them to Move. (Percentages.)

Current Residence	Stay	MOVE			
		Total	To Utah Nonmetropolitan	To Utah Metropolitan	Out of Utah
Nonmetropolitan	70.6 (781)	58.3 (619)	56.8 (333)	83.9 (193)	77.4 (93)
Metropolitan	81.3 (786)	73.8 (203)	58.6 (75)	85.7 (42)	81.3 (86)

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